

What is claimed is:

1. A method for serving information, the method comprising:
 - 5 receiving a request for information from a client;
 - processing the request by generating an information page;
 - constructing a reference identifying retrievable audio data associated with the information page, the reference being customized depending on attributes of the client requesting the information; and
 - 10 serving the information page including the reference over a network to the client.
2. A method as in claim 1, wherein constructing the reference includes:
 - 15 transmitting a message to the client inquiring what type of audio format is compatible with a browser at the client; and
 - receiving a response from the client indicating at least one audio format supported by the browser at the client.
3. A method as in claim 2, wherein constructing the reference further includes:
 - 20 based on the response, providing command information in a data field of the reference to identify an audio format supported by the browser at the client.
4. A method as in claim 3, wherein the client displaying the served information page retrieves the retrievable audio data based on the reference embedded in the information page and wherein the command information in a data field of the reference identifies a format for serving the retrievable audio data to the client.
 - 25
5. A method as in claim 1, wherein the reference includes a data field identifying an audio server capable of serving the retrievable audio data.

6. A method as in claim 5, wherein the reference may be invoked by the client according to Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP).
7. A method as in claim 1, wherein generating the information page includes:
 - 5 retrieving an information page associated with the requested information;
 - parsing the information page for a URL (Uniform Resource Locator) that references corresponding audio data; and
 - enabling the client to retrieve the audio data via use of the reference instead of the URL by including the constructed reference in the served information page in lieu of the URL that references corresponding audio data.
8. A method as in claim 1, wherein the reference further includes a data field to store an identifier of a corresponding audio data file associated with the retrievable audio data.
- 15 9. A method as in claim 1, wherein the reference includes:
 - i) an audio command; and
 - ii) identification of an audio server capable of serving the audio data to the client according to the audio command.
- 20 10. A method as in claim 1, wherein constructing the reference includes:
 - determining a type of audio data that is compatible with the client requesting the information; and
 - selecting an appropriate audio command for inclusion in the reference so that an audio server, upon receiving an audio request from the client, serves the audio data in a format compatible with the client.
- 25 11. A method as in claim 10, wherein the audio command is chosen from the group of commands including: MERGE, CONVERT, CONCATENATE, SEPARATE, SAMPLE, and OFFSET.
- 30

12. A method as in claim 1, wherein the reference is a string of text including data fields for identifying: a) a location of the audio data associated with the reference, and b) a preferred format for transmitting the audio data to the client.

5 13. An apparatus for serving information, the apparatus comprising:

10 a processor;

14 a memory;

18 an input output mechanism; and

22 an interconnection mechanism coupling the processor, the memory and the input output mechanism;

26 wherein the memory is encoded with logic instructions that, when performed on the processor, cause the apparatus to serve information and perform the operations of:

30 receiving a request for information from a client;

34 processing the request by generating a web page;

38 constructing a reference to a location of audio data associated with the web page, the reference being customized depending on attributes of the client requesting the information; and

42 serving the web page including the reference over a network to the client.

46 14. A computer system as in claim 13 that, when generating a notification message and respectively transmitting a notification message, further performs operations of:

50 15. An apparatus as in claim 13 that, when constructing the reference, further performs operations of:

54 transmitting a message to the client inquiring what type of audio format is compatible with a browser at the client; and

58 receiving a response from the client indicating at least one audio format supported by the browser at the client.

16. An apparatus as in claim 15 that, when constructing the reference, further performs operations of:

based on the response, providing command information in a data field of the reference to identify an audio format supported by the browser at the client.

5

17. An apparatus as in claim 16, wherein the client displaying the served web page retrieves the audio data based on the reference included in the web page served to the client; and

10 wherein the command information identifies a format for serving the audio data to the client.

18. An apparatus as in claim 13, wherein the reference includes a data field identifying an audio server capable of serving the audio data.

15 19. An apparatus as in claim 13, wherein the reference may be invoked by the client according to Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP).

20. An apparatus as in claim 13 that, when generating the web page, further performs operations of:

20 retrieving web page information associated with the requested information;

parsing the web page information for a URL (Uniform Resource Locator) that references corresponding audio data; and

25 enabling the client to retrieve the audio data use of via the reference instead of the URL by including the constructed reference in the served web page in lieu of the URL that references corresponding audio data.

21. An apparatus as in claim 13, wherein the reference further includes a data field to store an identifier of a corresponding audio data file associated with the audio data.

30

22. An apparatus as in claim 13, wherein the reference includes:

- i) an audio command; and
- ii) identification an audio server capable of serving the audio data to the client according to the audio command.

5

23. An apparatus as in claim 13 that, when constructing the reference, further performs operations of:

determining a type of audio data that is compatible with the client requesting the information; and

10

selecting an appropriate audio command for inclusion in the reference so that an audio server, upon receiving request from the client, serves the audio data in a format compatible with the client.

24. An apparatus as in claim 23, wherein the audio command is chosen from the group of commands including: MERGE, CONVERT, CONCATENATE, SEPARATE, SAMPLE, and OFFSET.

15

25. An apparatus as in claim 13, wherein the reference is a string of text including data fields for identifying: a) a location of the audio data associated with the reference, and b) a preferred format for transmitting the audio data to the client.

20

26. A server computer system comprising:

means for receiving a request for information from a client;

means for processing the request by generating a web page;

25

means for constructing a reference identifying retrievable audio data associated with the web page, the reference being customized depending on attributes of the client requesting the information; and

means for serving the web page including the reference over a network to the client.

27. A computer program product including a computer-readable medium having instructions stored thereon for processing data information, such that the instructions, when carried out by a processing device, enable the processing device to perform the steps of:

5 receiving a request for information from a client;

 processing the request by generating an information page;

 constructing a reference identifying retrievable audio data associated with the information page, the reference being customized depending on attributes of the client requesting the information; and

10 serving the information page including the reference over a network to the client.

28. A method of supporting retrieval of data over a network, the method comprising:

15 at a first server, parsing an information page for network address information associated with retrievable data; and

 at the first server, instead of serving the information page including the network address information to a client:

20 converting the network address information into a locator reference that includes a first field identifying a data format supported by the client; and

 serving the information page including the locator reference to the client, enabling the client to retrieve the retrievable data based on use of the locator reference.

25 29. A method as in claim 28, wherein the locator reference is a string of text that includes a second field identifying a network address of a second server from which to retrieve the data.

30 30. A method as in claim 28 further comprising:

 transmitting a message to the client inquiring what type of data format is compatible with a browser at the client; and

receiving a response from the client indicating at least one data format supported by the browser at the client.

15